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ABSTRACT

The paper was a preliminary study of the role of settlement schools in Southern Appalachia. A settlement school was defined as a nonprofit private institution which has a relationship with the community or county in which it is located. The manner in which the school was founded gives some insight into the relationship between the school, the local community, and Southern Appalachia. How, and by whom, the school was governed was also indicative of the attitude of those involved with the school. In addition, the composition of the faculty and student body reflected the objectives of the school. The paper gave the history of many settlement schools, both nondenominational and church-supported. Sources of support came from a variety of areas. Fund-raising efforts seem to have concentrated in the Northeast. Local support generally came in the form of land, labor, supplies, and produce, although many of the schools were also supported by churches and religious organizations. The goals were reflected in curricular and extracurricular activities--some courses were specifically related to the region; many had vocational and work programs. Since their inception, however, settlement schools have changed--the growth of the public school systems has forced them to reevaluate their situations. Some have closed; others have eliminated their traditional academic programs. To accomodate these changes, it was recommended that the settlement schools of Southern Appalachia reassess their validity for the directions the region is moving. They will have to become more involved with their communities and the region in general. (KM)

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THE ROLE OF SETTLEMENT SCHOOLS IN SOUTHERN APPALACHIA

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AN EXPLANATION

The research done for this paper was a preliminary study, or survey, of the role of settlement schools in Southern Appalachia. A good deal of material remains to be investigated. Time did not allow me to use as many of the resources at the Berea College Library as I had hoped. The libraries of other settlement schools should provide many more sources of information. In addition, faculty, students, and local residents can be interviewed.

In this paper I attempted to touch on some of the important aspects of settlement schools in Southern Appalachia, with clarification from a few specific examples. My primary area of concern is the nature of the relationship between the settlement schools and the communities in which they are located.

The major problem I encountered was the one-sided picture of settlement schools I received from my research. Most of the material I read was associated in some way with the schools themselves. I need to examine these schools from the point of view of the community. I hope to locate sources which will allow me to do this.

Before beginning an examination of the settlement schools of Southern Appalachia, one must first specify just what is meant by the term 'settlement school'. John C. Campbell has used the designation 'church and independent schools' to replace the more commonly used 'mountain mission schools'. Campbell distinguished these schools "...from the public schools and from the self-supporting or well-endowed private schools which have a more general patronage."[1] Loren Kramer, the author of a 1969 survey of Southern Appalachian settlement institutions, presented a more comprehensive definition: "A Settlement Institution of the Southern Appalachians is a private, non-profit, rural organization in the Southern Appalachians designed to promote and provide programs, services, and development with the immediate community or nearby surrounding area in which it is located."[2]

For the purposes of this study, I have developed some guidelines for a working definition of a settlement school. As both Campbell and Kramer have pointed out, it is a private institution which has not been established for profit. Whereas

Kramer is interested in settlement institutions in general, I am concerned with those settlement institutions of Southern Appalachia which focus (or at one time did focus) on education. A settlement school does not necessarily have to be located in a rural area, as Kramer stipulated. However, it does have (or should be striving toward) some relationship with the community or county in which it is located. That is, the settlement school should, in some way, serve the people residing in the vicinity of the school.

In considering the history, present status, and future role of the settlement school, a fundamental issue is the relationship of the institution with the local community and, more generally, with the Southern Appalachian region. The manner in which the school was founded gives some amount of insight into what kind of tone was set for a relationship. How, and by whom, the school was governed is also indicative of the attitude of those involved with the school toward the community. In addition, the composition of the faculty and student body reflect the objectives of the settlement school. These objectives, often explicitly stated in catalogues or fund-raising pamphlets, can also be discovered through an examina-

tion of the curriculum and various programs offered by the school.

The founding of the different settlement schools of Southern Appalachia provides us with many interesting stories, as well as with useful information about the social and economic conditions of various areas of Appalachia. Martha Berry's venture in Georgia exemplifies one woman's realization of the needs of the people around her and an attempt to meet those needs. She was called the 'Sunday Lady' because she became involved with the education of the children of her area by telling Bible stories to a group of youngsters on Sundays. These children expressed a desire to learn more about all manner of subjects and so Martha Berry organized classes in Possum Trot, Mount Alto, Foster's Bend, and Pleasant Valley. Besides teaching, she spent time visiting families in this area. Martha Berry wrote of how these visits affected her: "'During one of these visits my simple desire to do something...became a determined resolution to devote my entire time and means to teaching them a way to help themselves.'"[3] On land left to her by her father, Martha Berry built a one-room schoolhouse. Against the advice of her family and friends, she deeded her land to the boarding

school she planned to establish. In 1902 the Boys' Industrial School opened with a class of eighteen boys. Although such people as Captain John Barnwell (an architect) and John Eagan (an Atlanta businessman) donated their services, Martha Berry was forced to make fund-raising trips in order to support her school.

Another woman responsible for the founding of a settlement school in Southern Appalachia was Alice Geddes Lloyd. Forced to leave Boston, Massachusetts because of her health, Alce Lloyd came to Kentucky in search of a warmer climate. She was asked by Abisha Johnson to come and help the children of Caney Creek, in Knott County, Ky. He promised her land and a shack. So, Alice Lloyd set to work writing letters asking for money, books, and teachers. In time, a school was built and staffed. It is interesting to note that Alice Lloyd promised the people of Caney Creek that she would not interfere with politics, moonshining, or their religion.

Both Martha Berry and Alice Lloyd established independent, or non-denominational, schools. Many of the settlement schools of Southern Appalachia were founded by representatives of different churches. For example, Round Hill Academy, in Union Mills, North Carolina, was begun in 1899 by a local Baptist church. Several schools were founded by ministers under the auspices of

their particular church. Red Bird Mission, for instance, was established in 1921 in Beverly, Kentucky by Reverend J.J. DeWall with the support of the United Methodist Church.

In 1899 a Baptist preacher, Reverend James A. Burns, founded Oneida Institute in Clay County, Kentucky in an attempt to end the feuding in the area. According to an account of the history of Oneida Institute, Reverend Burns "...was filled with the conviction that Christian education alone would rescue the mountains from moonshine and murder."[4] Reverend Burns began his endeavor by bringing together twelve of the older men of the opposing clans. He was able to convince them to sign their names as trustees for a charter of Oneida Institute. The next step was to hold a meeting of the younger, more hostile men. A truce was agreed upon in order to give the school a chance to succeed. Reverend Burns was given some land on the condition that he would build a schoolhouse on it. In 1899 the school opened with one hundred pupils and three teachers.

Other Appalachian settlement schools were sponsored by groups of people and organizations. Tallula Falls School of Georgia was owned by the Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs. Hindman Settlement School, of Knott County, Kentucky, was sponsered by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

It is important to note that some settlement schools were founded on the request of local residents, while others were established by outsiders. Equally important to the acceptance of the school in a community was the form of governance. The schools which invited the participation of local people as trustees were attempting to avoid a situation of isolation from the community as a whole.

The sources of support for the settlement schools, in monetary and other forms, are interesting to examine. A good percentage of the contributions from individuals came from the Northeast. Fund-raising efforts seem to have concentrated on this area of the country. Martha Berry made numerous trips up North, as did groups of students from Caney Creek. Large sums of money had to be raised. Alice Lloyd personally raised more than two million dollars for her school. Since the settlement schools received very little money in tuition (which was sometimes paid in interesting forms-such as farm animals), a great deal of financial instability was experienced, especially by those schools not regularly supported by a church or mission board.

I do not mean to imply that there was no local support for the settlement schools of Southern Appalachia. An illustration of local support is the tradition which developed among the families

associated with the Berry schools in Georgia. At the beginning of the school term each family would send a contribution of one dollar. One year there were eight hundred families helping to support the school in this way.

Another example of community support is the response given by the townspeople of Hindman in January of 1910, after a disastrous fire at the Hindman Settlement School. Over two thousand dollars was raised, as well as a pledge of close to one thousand days of labor, to help rebuild the school.

Other settlement schools received gifts of land and buildings from the local populace. When Pleasant Hill Academy of Tennessee built its second schoolhouse, the land was donated by Mrs. Lewis Bennett, a former resident of Pleasant Hill. Other community members contributed materials and assisted in the construction of the building.

The acquisition of land was extremely important to many of the settlement schools. Some of the schools have saved a considerable amount of money by operating their own farms. Oneida Institute, which has a sixteen thousand acre farm, was able to grow seventy-five percent of its own food in 1969. The use of student labor has also cut down expenses for most schools.

The sale of articles produced by the students--woven goods, woodcarvings, etc.--raises some money, and is at the same time a sort of advertisement for the school. These activities play a greater role at some schools than at others. John C. Campbell Folk School claimed to be ninety percent self-supporting in 1966.

Many Appalachian settlement schools have been supported by churches and religious organizations. For example, Mount Carmel Institute, in Jackson, Kentucky, is maintained by the Kentucky Mountain Holiness Association. The staff of this school is paid no salary; their room and board is provided for them. The American Missionary Association has helped to fund Pleasant Hill Academy. Similarly, the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptists was responsible for aiding various settlement schools throughout the Southern Appalachian area.

Most of the settlement schools which were associated with a specific church made it clear that their program was non-denominational in nature. Emma Dodge wrote in a history of Pleasant Hill Academy, "The organization of a Congregational church did not mean that the school was established to further this particular denomination. Congregational churches support this school through the American Missionary Association. The aim of the Academy is christian education and in so far as the soul is

helped to higher things, so far is a success."[5] There were a few schools which were of a more 'missionary' character. In 1923 Mabel Withoft wrote that Fruitland Institute of North Carolina gave special training in "soul-winning".[6]

Many settlement schools emphasized a religious objective for their students. Often attendance was required at church services and courses in Bible study. The Riverside Christian Training School in Lost Creek, Kentucky "'...seeks by the help of God to give a good education for this life and to lead students to the acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.'"[7] Annville Institute, in Jackson County, Kentucky, has a similar goal. The school considers itself to be an experiment in Christian living.

The more secular objectives of the settlement schools of Southern Appalachia may be discussed in terms of the relationship of a school with its surrounding community and its commitment to the Appalachian region. One of the stated goals of Red Bird Mission is to help better the lives of the mountain people. A more concrete application of this goal is the promise Alice Lloyd students were required to make--that is, to return to live and work in the mountains. The Caney Junior College

Bulletin of 1957-1959 stated, "Objective: The training of selected mountaineers as professional men and women for efficient and consecrated leaderhip in the Southern Highlands."[8] Alice Lloyd College also has as its goal the preservation of Appalachian culture. The John C. Campbell Folk School is another example of an institution working to prevent the disappearance of the culture of Appalachia. John Ramsey explained, "Saving the best of the southern highland culture is a conservation issue equally important as protecting streams...and cherishing clear starlit nights..."[9] Various settlement schools teach different facets of mountain culture--such as weaving, folk dancing, and traditional songs.

The goals of the settlment schools are reflected in the curricular and extra-curricular activities provided for the students. Some schools offer courses specifically related to Southern Appalachia. At Caney Junior College (now Alice Lloyd College) education courses were geared to mountain society and rural schools. There was also a physical education course on games for rural schools. In addition, the Ethics course was related to the Southern Highlanders.

Vocational training and work programs are a part of many settlement schools. One purpose of the work program was to

demonstrate to the students that there is dignity in manual labor. In addition, the work program is necessary to provide the students with a means to earn money to meet expenses.

The aims of some of the settlement schools are closely related to the communities in which they are located. Their effort extends further than a traditional education for the children of the community. The philosophy of the John C. Campbell Folk School is that "Education must be grounded in the human, cultural, and natural resources of the community if it is to contribute to the enrichment of community life."[10] In accordance with this line of thinking, some settlement schools have developed programs and services specifically for their communities. Hindman Settlement School is a good example of a school working for, and with its community. From the early 1900's there was a trained nurse who served both the school and the community. Arrangements were made to bring those who needed more specialized care to hospitals in Louisville and Lexington. In the summer of 1916 a Teacher's Institute was held at Hindman for over one hundred country teachers. The school's Fireside Industries encourages and provides a market for mountain crafts. Current activities at Hindman Settlement School include recreation, arts and crafts, music, and kindergarten programs for rural schools

and communities in the surrounding area.

In recent years, there have been numerous factors effecting change in Southern Appalachia. These developments--such as federally-funded programs, new highways, and better public school systems--have had an impact on the settlement schools. These schools have had to consider their role in Southern Appalachia; that is, how they must change in order to avoid duplicating public programs of offering services which no longer meet the needs of present-day Appalachians. Loren Kramer reported that at Sunset Gap Community Center in Newport, Tennessee, "All the educational, religious, and social services...belong to the people themselves and are used sensitively to meet the problems of the last half of the twentieth century in the Southern Appalachians."[11]

The settlement schools have changed in various ways. The growth of the public school system, in particular, has forced the settlement institutions to reevaluate their situations. Some schools have closed. Others have eliminated their traditional academic programs entirely and have moved on to other endeavors. Buckhorn School in Perry County is an example of this sort of change. Founded in 1903, Buckhorn at one time had a hospital, a church, a school, and an orphanage. It also operated Witherspoon College. At present, Buckhorn runs the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency, which does work in the area of special education.

Several settlement schools have developed a working relationship with the public schools in their areas. A few institutions, such as Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Kentucky and Pleasant Hill Academy, have given some of their facilities to the public school system. Some schools provide a home for children who live too far from the public school to attend regularly as day students.

Enrichment programs in the public schools and the community as a whole have become the responsibility of various settlement schools. Oscar Fogle, a former principal of Pleasant Hill Academy wrote, "It is the purpose of the school not to compete with the state and county programs of education, but to cooperate with it and supplement it in the way that may seem desirable."[12] Red Bird Mission has been putting this idea into action. The county high school is staffed by Red Bird and the Mission pays approximately one third of the school's expenses, as well as running a kindergarten.

Most settlement schools have had to change the level of their academic programs. Friendsville Academy, in Tennessee, was one school which adjusted its emphasis as the public schools entered the area. In 1963, the elementary grades were phased out. In addition, Friendsville has extended its search for students so

that it now encompasses a much larger area.

Changes forced upon Appalachia, and thus on the settlement schools of Appalachia, have altered the inolvement of these schools with their communities. The attitude at Henderson Settlement typifies the goals of the more realistic settlement schools: "'We see the role of Henderson Settlement as channeling all available resources to the goal of community self-determination through helping people to make the decisions which affect their lives.'"[13] Sunset Gap Community Center, whose Board of Directors consists of local people, provides many community services. They include a library, thrift shops, pre-school programs, a church school, a sewing club, and a summer day camp.

The changes which occurred at these settlement schools lead to a consideration of the future role of settlement schools in Southern Appalachia. Victor Obenhaus, a principal at Pleasant Hill Academy, observed, "Whether this and similar schools should close may depend upon the type of answer they may give through their total program to the major problems of the area they serve."[14] Settlement schools which do not address themselves to the needs of their communities probably will not, and should not, survive. It is important that programs and services not be forced on people (as has been done so often in the past), but rather they should evolve from the community. In other words, the direction

should come from the people of the local area with support from the settlement school. George Bidstrup wrote of the John C. Campbell Folk School, "Our goal has always been to share in the life of our local community and this may lead us in the direction of working more with existing programs, instead of providing programs for the community."[15]

In effect, Bidstrup is suggesting that the settlement school should work within the framework of services operating in the community. Perhaps the settlement schools can supplement what is offered, as has been done in the public schools. The way in which this enrichment is implemented is extremely important. If the settlement school has attempted to become an integral part of the community, by participating in local activities and by inviting meaningful community involvement in the school, a great deal more can be accomplished.

Research on various aspects of Southern Appalachia can be sponsered by settlement schools. The Pittman Center, in Sevierville, Tennessee, has been planning a research, resorce, and training center for the study of the use of leisure time. Another research project, which is being carried on by Alice Lloyd College in coordination with a few other schools, is the Appalachian Oral History Project. This is an extremely

interesting endeavor to gather the history of the Southern Appalachian region through interviews of local residents.

The settlement schools of Southern Appalachia must reassess their validity in terms of the directions in which the region is moving. There must be a willingness to change if the situation warrants it. Finally, the settlement schools will have to become more involved with their communities and with the Southern Appalachian region, in general. Hopefully, this will lead to a change from settlement institutions to community organizations.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Campbell, The Southern Highlander and His Homeland, page 271.

[2]Kramer, Loren, Settlement Institutions in Southern Appalachia, page 3.

[3]Kane, Harnett, Miracle in the Mountains, page 37.

[4]Stifler, James, The Story of Oneida Institute (from a folder on Oneida Institute in the Special Collection of Berea College's library), page 6.

[5]Dodge, Emma, Souvenir History of Pleasant Hill Academy, page 31, (from the Special Collection folder on Pleasant Hill Academy).

[6]Withoft, Mabel, Oak and Laurel, page 78.

[7]Kramer, Op. Cit., page 46.

[8]Caney Junior College Bulletin, 1957-1959, page 1 (from the Special Collection folder on Caney Creek Community Center).

[9]Ramsey, John, "Appalachian Folk School", (from the Special Collection folder on John C. Campbell Folk School). 1972

[10]Kramer, Op. Cit., page 54.

[11]Kramer, Op. Cit., page 61.

[12]Fogle, Oscar, (from the Special Collection folder on Pleasant Hill Academy).

[13]Kramer, Op. Cit., page 28.

[14]Obenhaus, Victor, "Wholeness vs. Holiness in the Mountains, The Pleasant Hill Academy", page 361.

[15]Bidstrup, George, "The Folk School Faces the Future", page 42.

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22. Alice Lloyd College

23. Annville Institute

24. Buckhorn School

25. Caney Creek Community Center

26. Hindman Settlement School

27. John C. Campbell Folk School

28. Kingdom Come Settlement School

29. Oneida Institute

30. Pine Mountain Settlement School

31. Pleasant Hill Academy